Ram

Wednesday, October 17, 2018

History meets religion

• தி ஹிந்து நாளிதழில் 2007ம் ஆண்டு மே 5ம்தேதி இராமாயணச்சாவடி பற்றி வந்த செய்தி

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[Ramayana Chavadi is Goddess Meenakshi's abode for a day]

• References about Madurai in the Halasya Mahatmyam, Thiruvilayadal Puranam and other classic literature and its trading links with ancient Greeks and Romans trumpet its antiqueness and ancient traditional legacies that have been passed on to generations together.True to its antiquity, the Temple City has much more to explore. One such structure is the Ramayana Chavadi on North Masi Street. Tucked between the age-old Krishna Temple and Chellathamman Temple, Ramayana Chavadi like several other structures in the city, has an interesting history to narrate.One of the oldest resident of North Masi Street, P. Varadarasan, says that though the exact origin of Ramayana Chavadi is not known, it is believed that Thottakari Meenakshi donated it for the benefit of her community Thousand House Yadavas (Aayiram Veetu Yadavavarkal).

Donation

For some reasons, `Chavadi' and 'Aatu Thottlil' were brought to auction for defaulting tax payment. Thottakari Meenakshi, an old lady who distributed curd and buttermilk took possession of the properties. When King Thirumalai Naicker enquired about her desires she said she wanted Goddess Meenakshi to stay in the Chavadi for a day during the Chithirai Festival."This is the one of the two places where Goddess Meenakshi stays for an entire day. It falls on the fifth day of the 12-day Chithirai festival. The other place is Villapuram

Pavarkai Mandagapadi," says Mr. Varadarasan. But there is a difference. At Villapuram Pavarkai Mandagapadi deposit has to be paid whereas for Ramayana Chavadi there is no such requirement.

• Inscription

The Chavadi has an inscription and a pattayam that was handed over by King Thirumalai Naicker. It has the sanction for Goddess Meenakshi's stay. The Chavadi has another unique history. Sri Sathguru Palani Nachimuthu Siva Narayana Desika Swamigal, also known as Palani Samiar and Yadava Madathipathy, who constructed the Idayan Madam at Palani, stayed at Ramayana Chavadi during 19th century. He also collected Yadavas of North Masi Street to construct a Krishna Temple. After installing the moola vigraha in the temple, the Palani Samiyar attained Samadhi at Puttuthoppu.

• Religious harmony

The Chavadi stands as a symbol of religious harmony with Lord Dhandayuthapani and Lord Rama. Besides, the Chavadi also houses the portrait of Sri Sathguru Palani Nachimuthu Siva Narayana Desika Swamigal and many believe that Chavadi was constructed at the initiative of the Swamigal.Though the inscription found on the floor dates back to 1881-2-9, the consecration was held in 1949 with a few added features such as statues of Jawaharlal Nehru, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose and Mahatma Gandhi.

• Origin of name

Ramayana was read out to people for inculcating morals in them. Though other meeting places or `chavadis' such as Pitchai Pillai Chavadi, Maravar Chavadi were named after the community, Chavadi on North Masi Street owned by Yadavas was named after the activity, says Mr.Varadarasan.The simple structure with 16 beautifully carved pillars served the purpose of a community centre that provides space for the residents to convene meetings to discuss issues threadbare, says V.R. Suryanarayanan, another resident of the area."Even disputes that were not resolved were settled here because people were first made to listen to the story and morals highlighted in Ramayana. There was always a consensus by the end of the meeting, " he says and adds that the 350-year-old structure stands as a testimony to Thousand House Yadavas, who live in 58 villages in and around Madurai.The Chavadi houses a statue of Lord Vinayakar that was donated by King Thirumalai Naicker. Later, to suit its name, the statues of Lord Rama and Lord Dhandayuthapani were installed in 1945, he says.The `Chavadi' or the community centre that was once a meeting place slowly turned into a marriage hall. But soon again, it again became a meeting centre. The doors of Chavadi opens only to accommodate Goddess Meenakshi, Goddess Chellathamman and Sri Krishna during the festival time of the respective temples.Besides, the Chavadi has a space for various other Vahanas of Lord Krishna and a cow yard at the back and a Nachimuthu Karuppaasamy Temple in its right corner.

Reporter. S.S.KAVITHA

தகவலை பதிவு செய்தவர்: ஸ்ரீ பா ல சு பி க் ஷ ம் E.P.I. இராம சுப்பிரமணியன்

ஸ்ரீ பால சு பி க் ஷ ம் at 11:35 PM

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